

## Dingle, 1971

By H. C. HUGGINS, F.R.E.S.

I first visited Dingle in 1961, in the company of my wife and Mr E. S. A. Baynes, and I have been there every year since, except for 1965, when I met with a severe accident and went to hospital instead.

The idea of these visits originated with Mr Baynes. In 1953 a party of bird-ringers visited Inishvickilaun, the farthest of the Blaskets, and Mr J. E. Flynn, the well-known Irish sportsman and naturalist was one of them. Mr Baynes had the inspiration that *Euphyia bilineata* s.sp. *isolata* Kane might be on Inishvickilaun and as its only hitherto known habitat, the Tearaght, is now unworkable, gave Mr Flynn a description of the moth, and on the return of the party, which spent eight days there, was rewarded with three specimens.

We therefore decided to stay at Dingle and visit Inishvickilaun by motor-boat, and to cut matters short, in a number of visits I have seen 20 *isolata* and captured nine, a very good percentage if the dangerous places it inhabits are considered.

In the ten years I have visited Dingle, a fair number of changes have taken place, mostly beneficial to the tourist and visitor, but not so pleasing to the lepidopterist. A good many of the buildings have had a face-lift; the old lichenous cement has been cleaned off and clean paint substituted, with a bad effect on the unique local race of *Cryphia muralis* Forst.

The high hedge round which the two very late specimens of *Celastrina argiolus* L. were flying on August 24th 1970 has been cut to ground level to make more light for a bungalow built in the field behind it, giving a fine view at times of the family washing.

A more serious loss, however, is the bohireen on the right hand side of the road leading to the Connor. It was only a couple of hundred yards long, but it was here my wife found the first authenticated Irish specimen of *Platyptilia calodactyla* Hübn. I have since turned up the moth in several other places, but usually rarely, but in this one, on a warm afternoon, a dozen or so might be seen. I refrained from netting any in the past three years as this was so obviously its best locality, but when I went there this year, a farm building had been erected at the end, the hedges cut down, and the banks levelled and the road roughly paved. At one corner a bit of hedge and bank had been left, and here I disturbed 3 *calodactyla*, which of course I left.

Finally Coomenoole, a delightful sandy beach near Slea Head, surrounded by high cliffs, has become an ideal bathing and surfing station. When Mr Baynes, my wife and myself visited this place in 1961 it was difficult of access, as the only way down was by a track for horses and cattle which, as water was scarce on the high ground, came down to a spring at the foot. At the foot of the cliffs was one of the two best places I know for *bilineata* s.sp. *hibernica* Prout; it had in the past

been worked by both Donovan and Dr Kettlewell. Our party in 1961 visited it five days running. On three we saw no one else, and on the other two, the same girls who had come over from Dunquin for a bathe.

In 1964 the authorities made a motor road to the shore so that today in fine weather at least fifty cars may be expected on the road. The *bilineata* localities accessible were two; one was a fissure in the cliff, well covered with grass, kidney vetch and other plants, the other a series of hollows and shallow caves at ground level. I used to climb up the fissure and Mr Baynes to rattle in the hollows and chase the moths as they flew out over the sand.

Today the hollows are in almost universal occupation by girls undressing to bathe, so any investigation of their recesses for *bilineata* might provoke unworthy suspicions, and my fissure has been entirely cleared of all vegetation by the film company producing "Ryan's Daughter" who wished to make the place more dramatic. No doubt there are still plenty of *bilineata* high up on the cliffs, but these cannot be reached from above because of the overhang, and the choughs that formerly nested in the holes below this have gone elsewhere.

I went to Dingle a little later than usual in 1971; the weather on the whole was good, but I am now beginning to find that the more distant localities are getting beyond me, and have to rely to a large extent on the Robinson trap.

Immigrants were the scarcest I have ever known in Dingle; *Plusia gamma* L. appeared most nights, but except for 23 on August 9th, I never saw more than half a dozen on any occasion, and all other migrants were confined to two *Nomophila noctuella* Schiff. It was most disappointing as two days after I got home (September 12th) my garden was full of *gamma*, so I set the trap and and caught about 40, and also a worn female *Margaronia unionalis* Hübn. As I have twice bred this lovely creature I did not wish to bother again, and released her in the jasmine. I have since heard from Mr Baynes that *gamma* and *atalanta* were common at the end of September at Glandore Co. Cork, so undoubtedly I came home too soon.

I made a few observations on other insects that may be of interest.

*Pieris napi* L. It was a very good year for the second brood. I kept two, one by far the largest female I have ever seen. It was the ab. *vidua* Donovan, in which the black spots are enlarged and the veins outlined in black. This is a common form in the second brood in Ireland; oddly enough, the underside is usually less heavily marked than more typical ones. The other insect I kept had the forewings white and the hindwings yellowish cream.

*Argynnis aglaia* L. On August 10th, a very hot sunny day, I saw a male *aglaia* on the old road at the back of the creameries. I have not seen *aglaia* at Dingle before except on the higher Tralee road about four miles from the town. In

very hot weather Irish *aglaia* seem to wander a good deal; I saw four at Glengarriff in the heatwave of 1952, the only ones I have ever seen there. These Glengarriff ones were all males.

*Nymphalis io* L. was commoner again after last year's scarcity. I took one in the trap on August 12th.

*Eumenia semele* L. s.sp. *hibernica* Howarth. In all the years I have worked Dingle, I have never met with this butterfly, but Mr C. Edwards of the Marine Biological Station at Oban, who was also staying there, found it on the high ground above the road at both Slea Head and Clogher. He kindly called to tell me so and gave me four from Slea Head. Two days later, friends kindly gave me a lift to both places; I could only afford half an hour at each, but saw over a dozen in each place, and caught half a dozen. The insects were all of the Irish type defined by Mr Howarth, the Clogher ones seem a bit redder than the Slea Head ones, but I have not enough of either to be certain. One female at Clogher had an extra spot on the forewings; this seems commoner amongst Irish than chalk down specimens, as I have troubled to catch very few in Ireland, and took one with two extra spots in the Burren. These two Dingle localities are both barren stony slopes, which accounts for my missing the butterfly in the past, as there is nothing else on them except *Maniola jurtina* L., and at Glengarriff *semele* occurs everywhere. In the Coomerkane valley there it is common on the peat swamps, and when catching it there in 1950, I had often to run round a pool in pursuit.

*Cryphia muralis* Forst. becomes more and more localised and uncommon. I was not lucky enough to get a *nigra* Huggins this year, but caught one of the deep greenish-black form that is so near to it.

*Polia nebulosa* Hufn. was commoner than usual; I saw half a dozen in the trap, and needless to say they were all *ab. pallida* Tutt.

*Mamestra brassicae* L. The curious little Dingle form continues to turn up with the type. I have never seen this elsewhere in Ireland.

*Hadena cucubali* Fuessl. I took one of the blackish form of which Kane took one in the Blaskets (Donovan 49). This is only a rare aberration as I have bred the moth from the Blaskets and also from an islet off Adrigole, Co. Cork, and all were typical. My specimen was in the trap in Dingle town.

*Cerapteryx graminis* L. I found one in the trap in which the antler mark covers more than half the forewing. Irish *graminis* seem to vary more than our Essex ones. It is common in my garden trap, but I have never had an extreme aberration, whereas four years ago at Inch I took one with the forewings uniform pale drab without markings.

*Luperina nickerlii* Frey s.sp. *knilli* Boursin. I took 3 in the trap in 1971; the first was on the night of July 31st-1st

August, and even then not quite fresh, so its early emergence as suggested by the one on August 9th, 1969 is confirmed. Now that it has been taken on Inishmore in the Aran Islands I have no doubt it will be found in all suitable places in the south-west of Ireland, i.e. at the foot of sea cliffs where there is a quantity of detritus and vegetation. I have now taken 9 in all at Dingle; every year that I have stayed after the second week in August except 1970. Dingle ones, with one exception have been as black as *Aporophila nigra* Haw., but they begin to turn browner in a year or so.

*Plusia festucae* L. Very common in the trap almost every night, still no *gracilis* Lempke.

*Schrankia costaestrigalis* Steph. One, not fresh, in the trap on July 20th. Apart from the Killarney area, this seems to be the first Kerry record. I have no doubt that it would be found not uncommonly by working the damp lanes at early dusk, as I did at Glengarriff.

*Sterrha subsericeata* Haw. There were three in the trap on August 20/21st. I have not noticed the second brood mentioned in Irish papers; these were the usual small type like the English second brood specimens.

*Xanthorrhoe montanata* Schiff. On July 8th I got a lift to the Connor and managed to climb to about 2,800 feet in the Brandon range. I took half a dozen of the mountain *montanata*. Two of these were exactly like my ab. *shetlandica* Weir from Unst, with the central band reduced to two smeary lines, except that they were slightly larger. These agree with Kane, and not with Donovan (76).

One other, a female, was exactly like a sea-level specimen except that the band was a little darker. I have never found a typical one at this height before.

*Crambus selasellus* Hübn. I am glad to say that on July 10th I captured another specimen of ab. *brunnea* Huggins. This aberration seems decidedly rare; I must have seen at least 50 of the typical form since I took the first in 1966.

The Collared dove has now become very common. I counted eleven feeding together at a stable, and one uttered its monotonous note on the araucaria in the garden at Beners every morning I went to look at the trap. I also saw a turtle dove near Ballyferiter. This bird seems to be coming more frequently to western Ireland. The Irish Dipper at the water-splash on the road to Sleah Head was in good form in 1971; he posed for several minutes on two occasions for friends to whom I had given him an introduction.

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BUTTERFLIES IN THE CITY OF LONDON.—During a single week in August this year I saw specimens of *Pieris brassicae* L., *P. rapae* L., *Aglais urticae* L., *Nymphalis io* L., within one hundred yards of the Mansion House, while a beautifully fresh *Lycaena phlaeas* L. sunned itself on Mappin & Webb's window in Cheap-side, as oblivious to the crowds as they were to it.—J. A. C. GREENWOOD. 8.x.1971.